DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 852 RE 004 031

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TITLE	Individualized Instructional Objectives in Reading Methods Courses.
PUB DATE	Dec 71
NOTE	13p.; Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Tampa, Fla., Dec. 1971
AVAILABLE FROM	National Reading Conference, Inc., Marquette University, 1217 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53233
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Students; Course Descriptions; Course Objectives; *Individualized Instruction; *Methods Courses; Multimedia Instruction; *Reading Instruction; *Teacher Education; Team Teaching

ABSTRACT

The design of a program utilizing individualized instructional objectives (with 150 students per semester) in an undergraduate reading methods course is described. The program incorporates individualized instruction, team teaching, and the extensive use of multimedia. Students attend one mass lecture and two seminars each week. The required objectives demand that the students acquire certain concepts and understandings basic for all students. Students wishing to raise their scores on any evaluation test can submit a paper revealing an understanding of the selected items in the test. Elective objectives require that the student undertakes tasks similar to those required of a teacher in the classroom, and students are urged to choose their own objectives. The major purposes of the program are (1) to provide for individual students a more effective course of study fostering many of the characteristics seen as needed in the present and emerging society, (2) to engage the students in a cooperative strategy for learning similar to that he will be expected to implement with his own students, and (3) to design an educational process which will be more likely to provide the varying levels of competencies which will be needed as differentiated staffing in school faculties increase. Tables and references are included. (AW)

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ABSTRACT

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES IN READING METHODS COURSES

Patricia R. McClendon

Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Tampa, Fla., Dec. 2-4, 1971

The design of a program utilizing individualized instructional objectives (with 150 students per semester) in an undergraduate reading methods course is described. In addition to presenting course content, there are three major purposes of the course design:

1. To provide for the individual college student a more effective course of study which will foster many of the characteristics seen as needed in our present and emerging society.

2. To engage the undergraduate in a cooperative strategy for learning (rather than a receiving-telling mode) similar to that which he will be expected to implement with his own students.

3. To design an educational process which will be more likely to provide the varying levels of competencies which will be needed as differentiated staffing in school faculties increases due, in part, to the existing teacher surplus.

Three types of objectives are employed in the program.

Required objectives, listed in the course Program Guide, describe certain concepts and understandings considered basic for all students. Four multiple-choice tests are the primary means of evaluation for required objectives.

Test make-up objectives are developed by the individual student wishing to raise his score on any test. The student analyzes his test, writes specific objectives relating to areas of confusion, and submits a paper revealing an understanding of the selected items.

Elective objectives require that the student undertake tasks similar to those required of a teacher in the classroom. Although suggested elective objectives are given in the Program Guide, students are urged to modify and/or write their own objectives.

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INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES IN READING METHODS COURSES

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Those involved in teacher education have long been concerned with the quality and effectiveness of programs in institutions of higher education. In 1967 the U. S. Office of Education funded ten institutions for the purpose of designing innovative program models (Model Elementary Teacher Education Project). Extensive descriptive volumes published from each participating university outlined possible procedures for individualization of instruction. Unfortunately, the suggested designs were unfeasible for institutions the size of Winthrop College which has a student body of 3,750, with 1,250 students enrolled in the School of Education. Several program models provided some direction in their stated underlying assumptions and the Dean of the School of

Education urged staff members to utilize these in exploring alternative avenues for curriculum improvement.

Evolution of the Program

The decision to utilize individualized instructional objectives in reading methods courses was an outgrowth of planning for an overall teacher education program at Winthrop. Bases for curriculum planning embodied analysis of the:

> characteristics of the society in today's world which have the potential for becoming even more prominent and perplexing in the future;
> characteristics of the individual which seem to be vital if he is to function effectively in this society;
> characteristics of the teacher who will be able to provide in his classroom, a micro-society which will nurture capable individuals;
> envisioned roles of the elementary teacher as he provides an educational program from which will emerge such individuals; and
> characteristics of a teacher education program designed to enable the elementary teacher to prepare for these roles.

Within this framework, a Pilot Project for Individualizing Elementary Teacher Education (1) was instituted during the 1969-70 school year. A curriculum unit approach with individualized objectives served as the vehicle for individualizing instruction in the project which included only sixteen students and four courses.

Upon completion of the project, it became the task of various members of the School of Education staff to analyze the findings of the year's study in search of features which showed promise for an improved program, and to implement those features in the areas for which they were responsible. It was felt that many aspects of the Pilot Project could be incorporated into the area of reading instruction.

Winthrop College offers eight courses in the teaching of reading. One of these courses is a basic undergraduate study designed for elementary education

majors. With the exception of a course in reading in the secondary school, which may be taken at either the undergraduate or graduate level, the remaining courses are primarily graduate level and directed toward the in-service teacher. Although individualized instructional objectives have been, or are in the process of being, developed for all courses, the following presentation relates to the basic undergraduate reading course for the elementary education major. This course presents the greatest challenge for individualizing instruction due to the number of students (approximately 150 each semester) and the diverse areas represented in the group--elementary, early childhood, and special education majors. At the request of the staff members in charge of the latter groups, separate sections are not set aside for either special education or early childhood education students.

Purpose of the Program

As specific planning for the elementary reading course began, four purposes were given as much consideration as was course content.

1. To provide for the individual college student a more effective course of study which will foster many of the characteristics seen as needed in our present and emerging society.
2. To engage the undergraduate in a cooperative strategy for learning (rather than a receiving-telling mode) similar to that which he will be expected to implement with his own students.
3. To design an educational process which will be more likely to provide the varying levels of competencies which will be needed as differentiated staffing in school faculties increases due, in part, to the existing teacher surplus.
4. To devise an instructional plan to counteract the existing situation in which a disproportionately high percentage of the instructor's time is devoted to the less capable student.

Description of the Program

The plan presently in operation incorporates, in addition to individualized instructional objectives, team teaching and the extensive use of multimedia.

Organizational Format

Three concerns of reading staff members were fundamental to the establishment of the organizational format being used.

A primary concern centered around the recognition that a relatively large number of students, in the first year of the program, found in difficult to function in a course which did not follow the familiar traditional pattern of "lecture-assign textbook readings-test-grade." Although the frustrations voiced by these students did not seem to have a detrimental effect in the cognitive domain (based on comparison of test scores), the apparent consequences in the area of the affective domain could not be ignored.

Secondly, sections of the reading courses, prior to the introduction of this program, ranged in class size from approximately 28 to 38 students. Such class size was not conducive to the degree of interaction which was desired.

The last concern pertained to the desire on the part of the reading staff to engage in team teaching.

Consequently, this course is organized so that each student attends one mass lecture (150 students) and two seminars (approximately 20 students) per week. One staff member has the major responsibility for the mass lectures, however the other two staff members present mass lectures in their areas of special competencies. It is hoped that eventually the mass lecture will be relegated to a position of minor importance if not discontinued entirely. Increased emphasis will be placed on individual study and seminars which should function as inquiry groups.

Types of Objectives

Three types of objectives--required, test make-up, and elective--are employed in the program.

Perhaps the term "required objectives" appears incongruous in a plan which purports to be individualized, however, in this program they represent one facet of a competency-based structure. These objectives are listed in the Program Guide for the course and describe certain understandings and concepts which are considered basic for all students. The following, taken from the curriculum unit on word perception, is an example of the required objectives.

> 2:0405 After reading or hearing reports on selected research studies, the learner correctly identifies statements representing the findings.

Varied capacities for self-direction exhibited by previous students, combined with the large number of students enrolled in the course, seemed to mandate that the majority of the background information needed for required objectives be presented in mass lecture or in the main text used in the course. The primary means of evaluation for these objectives is four multiple-choice tests. The scores required on these tests depends on the level of competency set by the student as his goal.

Test make-up objectives are optional. Winthrop College has a system for grading which allows a student to take a course on an A-B-C-D-F basis or a S-U basis (S designating a grade of "C" or better). In an effort to minimize the potential negative aspects of grading, a procedure utilizing test make-up objectives was devised. Any student whose score falls below the level he has set for himself may analyze his test using an Answer Check Sheet (see page 6) and a Test Analysis Sheet (see page 7). He then choses, from the questions he missed, those he considers most important and writes objectives specifying what needs to be done for clarification. Within one week he must submit a

ANSWER CHECK SHEET

NAME DATE SECTION

	YOUR ANSWER*	CORRECT ANSWER
1		C
2		E
3		D
4		A
5		C
6		B
7		B
8		D
9		A
10		E
11		C
12		A
13		E
14		B
15		D
16		B
17		A
18		A
19		D
20		B
21		A
22		E
23		C
24		C
25		E
26		E
27		B
28		C
29		E
30		A
31		D
32		D
33		C
34		A
35		E
36		A
37		C
38		B
39		E
40		D
41		A
42		A
43		D
44		C
45		D
46		E
47		A
48		B
49		E
50		D

*IF THE ANSWER YOU GAVE WAS WRONG, WRITE THE ANSWER YOU GAVE IN THIS COLUMN.

TEST ANALYSIS SHEET
CURRICULUM UNITS 2:00 AND 2:01

Required Score	_____
Your Score	_____
No. of points to be clarified	_____

NAME_____ DATE_____ SECTION_____

Numbers in parentheses indicate point value of question. Questions without parentheses have a one point value. CIRCLE THE QUESTIONS YOU MISSED AND WRITE IN THE ANSWERS YOU GAVE.

Disadvantaged Child

1_____(3)
2_____(3)
3_____(3)
4_____(3)
5_____(3)

Historical Development

6_____
7_____
8_____
9_____
10_____
11_____
12_____
13_____

Devices/ Terms

14_____
15_____
16_____
17_____
18_____
28_____
47_____(2)
48_____(2)
49_____(2)

Physical Factors

19_____(3)
20_____(3)

Mental Factors

21_____(3)
24_____(3)
29_____
30_____(3)
44_____(3)

Motivational Factors

25_____(2)
26_____(2)
27_____(2)

Educational Factors

22_____(3)
23_____(3)

Readiness

31_____(3)
32_____(3)
33_____(3)
34_____(2)
35_____(3)
36_____(3)
37_____(3)

Persons

38_____
39_____
40_____
41_____
42_____
43_____
45_____(3)
46_____(3)
50_____(2)

I will clarify questions_____

PLANNED OBJECTIVES(S)

paper (based on his test make-up objectives) which reveals an understanding of the selected items and raises his score to the desired level.

Students setting as their goal an above average level of competency must complete a prescribed number of elective objectives in addition to maintaining a designated score on each test. Possible elective objectives are given in the Program Guide, however students are urged to modify these objectives and/or write their own elective objectives. Those objectives which are included in the Program Guide represent an attempt to have the student undertake a task similar to those required of a teacher in the classroom. For example, in the curriculum unit on word perception skills the following elective objective is listed.

> 2:0415 The learner, referring to characteristics of the "typical" disadvantaged child, outlines (in chart form) problems which this child might have in the development of word perception skills and suggestions for overcoming each problem. (No more than two pages)

In this objective the college student is expected to engage in the kind of thinking required of the classroom teacher as he plans his reading program. Suggestions for accomplishing each of these objectives are recorded on cassette tapes and made available for use on listening stations located in the Materials Center. Each student undertaking elective objectives is expected to share his studies in seminars both through oral reports and contributions to discussions. He must evaluate his elective objectives in terms of an adaptation of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain and designate the level of difficulty for each on a Contract Completion form. (see page 9).

CONTRACT COMPLETION

(Turn in both copies)

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2:_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2:_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2:_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM's TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2:_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2:_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER_____ DATE_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

NAME_____ SECTION_____
MAJOR_____
OBJECTIVE NUMBER_____ DATE_____
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY)_____
REASON_____
_____
_____
INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION
Excellent_____ Adequate_____
Inadequate at this level but adequate at a _____ level
Unacceptable_____

Major differences exist between required and elective objectives particularly in the type of thinking required, the level of difficulty of the objectives according to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the sources which are to be utilized, and the nature of the information. These differences are presented in the chart below.

MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE OBJECTIVES

Differences	Required Objectives	Elective Objectives
Type of Thinking Required	Convergent Thinking	Mainly Divergent Thinking
Level of Difficulty (Bloom's Taxonomy)	Predominantly 2.00 and 3.00 (Comprehension and Application)	Predominantly 3.00, 4.00, 5.00 and 6.00 (Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation)
Sources for Information	Primarily mass lecture and the main text used (audio-visual materials are utilized in mass lectures and seminars)	Individual utilization of various library resources, audio and video tapes, monographs and pamphlets, filmstrips and slides, curriculum guides, guide books, materials for reading instruction in the classroom.
Nature of Information	General concepts and understandings in the field of reading	Concepts and understandings from the field of reading related to the student's special area of concern

Criteria for Various Levels of Competency

The student who feels that he will be able to achieve at a superior level ("A") must attain, on three of four multiple-choice tests, a test score which is at least equal to 90 per cent of the highest score obtained on that test. Since any cut-off point is at best an arbitrary decision, a student may, in fact, fall a few points below the 90 per cent mark on several tests. Each test, except the final, must be brought up to the 90 per cent level or higher

by test make-up objectives. In addition, the superior student must complete four elective objectives from specified curriculum units. At least three of his elective objectives must be at a 3.00 level of difficulty (Application) or higher.

Criteria for the above average level of achievement ("B") state that the student must attain test scores which are at least equal to 85 per cent of the highest score obtained on each test. If he scores below that point he must analyze his test and complete test make-up objectives to increase his score to 85 per cent or higher. Students functioning at this level may use test make-up objectives for each test (except the final) and still obtain a "B" in the course no matter how low his original test scores were. Three elective objectives are required of these students, with no specific level of difficulty designated.

To function at an average ("C") level, the student must show satisfactory mastery of the basic concepts and understandings of this area of study by achieving a score on each test which is at least equal to 75 per cent of the highest score attained. Test make-up objectives may be used to reach this requirement. No elective objectives must be submitted by this student.

Conclusion

The program in progress at Winthrop College can best be described as "emerging." Revisions are made each semester in light of student and staff evaluations of the course. As the staff becomes more competent in planning and implementing the program, and as additional multimedia materials are developed, the projected purposes of this design for individualizing instruction should be realized. Just as extensive planning was required prior to the inception of the program, future changes must also emanate from a sound and comprehensive rationale. It is much too easy for those who develop individ-

ualized instructional objectives to become skillful in stating, precisely, the trivial. No educational program can withstand such a miscarriage of learning.

References

1. McClendon, Patricia R. Pilot Project for Individualizing Elementary Teacher Education, Final Report. 112 p. (Winthrop College, Rock Hill, S. C., 1970) ED 040 981, microfiche $0.50, hard copy $5.70 from EDRS.